2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

their encampment when the phenomenon occurs, they invariably secrete themselves, at the bottom of a boat, for example, if fishing, and remain silent for a short time before venturing to resume their interrupted employment.

5. Between dawn and sunrise they will do no work, save what is noiseless, lest the sun should be offended, and cause an eclipse, storm, or other misfortune to overtake them. If, therefore, they have occasion to start on a journey or hunting expedition at so early an hour, they proceed as quietly as possible, and refrain from the practice, observed at other periods of the day, of testing the strength of their bow-strings, as the snapping noise caused thereby is one of those to which the sun objects.

6. They invariably partake of a meal soon after rising, as it is believed that no luck can attend any one who starts to his day's work on an empty stomach.

7. They dare not use the wood of the tree called *al·aba-* (the bark of which supplies the fibre used in making harpoon lines and turtle nets) for cooking turtle, for, as will be found elsewhere,[1] this is an act so abhorrent to *mara ·ō·gar-* that he visits the offenders with summary and condign punishment.

8. In tempestuous weather the leaves of the *Mimusops Indica* are constantly thrown on the fires, as the popping sounds thus produced are thought to have the effect of assuaging *Pū·luga-*'s fury and causing the weather to moderate.

9. When they see a dark cloud approaching at a time when rain would prove very inconvenient, as when hunting, travelling, &c., they advise *Pū·luga-* to divert its course by shouting "*wâ·ra-jō·bo kō·pke, kō·pke, kō·pke*" [*Wā·ra-jōbo*[2] will bite, bite, bite (you)]. If in spite of this a shower falls they imagine that *Pū·luga-* is undeterred by their warning.

10. This practice of menacing *Pū·luga-* is probably that to which Colonel Symes alluded when he wrote that "they confess the influence of a malignant Being, and, during the south-west monsoon, when tempests prevail with unusual violence, they deprecate his wrath by wild choruses."

11. Storms are regarded as indications of *Pū·luga-*'s anger; winds are his breath, and are caused to be blown by his will; when it thunders *Pū·luga-* is said to be growling at something which has annoyed him; and lightning, they say, is a burning log flung by him at the object of his wrath.

12. There is an idea current that if during the first half of the rainy season they eat the *Caryota sobolifera*, or pluck and eat the seeds of the *Entada pursætha*, or gather yams or other edible

[1] *Vide post* "Mythology," paragraph 32.

[2] This snake, as already mentioned under "Medicine," appears to be the *Ophiophagus elaps*.

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

spot for centuries leads to the formation of kitchen-middens [1]. In the temporary camps something similar happens: the only difference consists in the fact that rubbish dumps only accumulate at the back of the temporary shelters, as a consequence of their peculiar shape that I shall not describe here. These dumps are heaven-sent love nests for insects of many species, mostly flies of a metallic green colour. They follow the Onge from camp to camp and thrive on scraps from human meals. When travelling in Little Andaman I was unmistakably warned of the nearby presence of Onge camps by the appearance of those familiar living beings.

The filth that coats the floors of communal Onge huts offers an ideal breeding ground also for myriads of fleas. Dogs spread them all over Little Andaman. Owing to the fact that the communal huts are deserted for months at a time during the dry season, the fleas become hungry and assault human beings vehemently whenever possible. When visiting empty communal huts I myself, and the persons with me, were plagued by such assaults. Fleas advanced suddenly from feet to head in thick, shimmering brown layers, covering first our legs. We were obliged to strip and douse ourselves with insect-repellents. As for other parasites, including ticks and mosquitos, equally plentiful in Little Andaman, the Onge do not appear to be inconvenienced by them.

The communal huts are used for another purpose as well, unhygienic but of high ethnological interest: the interment of human corpses. When they die, the inmates are buried beneath their beds. In other words, communal huts are also cemeteries. Many human skeletons are found by digging under the beds. Until 1952 this fact was unknown about the Andaman Islanders although it is encountered in all Onge communal huts without exception. An analysis of this custom led to further discoveries: the Onge wish to compel the spirit of a deceased person to remain close to the living as a protection, so they offer it the communal hut for an abode, the idea being that a spirit cannot wander far from the bones of its former body. A series of Onge practices point to this belief: felled enemies must be burned and reduced to ashes in order to render them harmless. Their hostile souls, according to the Onge, rise toward the sky in smoke as the bones are consumed. For the same reason, bones of relatives are fashioned into necklaces. The most conspicuous of these is the *ibidanghe*, worn generally by women and young girls, which is made from a decorated human jawbone. The aim is to obtain the assistance of the departed relation in fighting illness and bad luck. Direction in hunting, fishing and even quarrelling is supposed to come from the dead kept close to the living. We can trace this belief on the connection between bones and souls to a remote origin: Southern Asia megaliths had, in my opinion, no other cause for offering shelter to spirits and promoting useful relations between the living and the dead. I reached this conclusion after studying the contemporary habits of Travancore mountain and other Indian tribes, particularly the Munda. In Nias we find traces of the same customs as among different peoples of Indonesia and Oceania, who

[1] I discussed this at the two international anthropological congresses of 1952 (Vienna) and 1956 (Philadelphia), and have more to say on the subject in my book about the Onge.